

Never Isolated in Christ

YOUR WEEKLY VIEW BEHIND THE MASK OF ASSUMPTION PARISH

MAY 04, 2020

*For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:
By waiting and by calm you shall be saved,
in quiet and in trust shall be your strength.*

*Truly, the LORD is waiting to be gracious to you,
truly, he shall rise to show you mercy;
For the LORD is a God of justice:
happy are all who wait for him!*

-Isaiah 30:15, 18

Pastor's Note

Dear Assumption Parishioners,

For me, the most surreal experiences during this crisis have been when things are not, for a moment, surreal. The world is ending, right? This is one of those historic plagues that you read about in history books, is it not? We did voluntarily shut down our economy, didn't we? And yet, *something normal has the audacity to break through?*

I hope for you these moments of surreal normalcy have been joyful, ordinary, domestic things, like still having to mow the lawn or cook dinner. Where, without even realizing it, we fall back into old habits and then catch ourselves, startled that for an indeterminate amount of time, we forgot that there was anything extraordinary happening around us.

For a priest, though, as macabre as it may seem, that normalcy often involves death. For a family, the passing of a loved one is a significant and impactful moment. Six years later, I still vividly remember the passing of my grandfather, crying with my family, attending his funeral. But for a priest, we visit the hospital multiple times each week, and a few times each month we mourn with grieving families in hospice houses, at funerals, and at gravesides. This month has been no exception. We have lost some longtime parishioners, in at least one instance to the Coronavirus, but mostly just because, even when the world is ending, people still die from incurable disease and old age. The ordinary cycles of life and death have had the audacity to continue, even now.

And yet, through it all, I have not been able to shake this persistent, nagging feeling of *hope*. Partly because it has all been a reminder that, even when everything is different, nothing is. But mostly because this is the Easter Season, when we celebrate the Lord's victory over death. As I have prayed the Church's prayers for the dying and the dead, I have heard announced again and again our firm belief that the Resurrection of the Lord is our hope, too, and that what once was our greatest loss has now become our most triumphal gain: the attainment of true peace, of perfect relationship, and of never-ending communion with Jesus and the saints. As Christians, we have nothing to fear, because the Lord goes before us and we share in his victory.

May the Lord, who holds each of us in his hands, bless you and your families always!

F. Moore

Parish News

Governor Inslee's Latest Announcement

On May 01, Governor Inslee announced his plan for easing the Coronavirus restrictions while still keeping the citizens of Washington safe. There will be four phases, each spaced at least three weeks apart to ensure that the increased freedom does not result in a rapid spread of the virus.

What we know right now is that Phase 01, which begins today, allows for drive-in spiritual services. But groups of 50 or more people (e.g. our normal Sunday Masses) will not be allowed to gather until Phase 04, which will begin on July 06 at the earliest. There is a small possibility that we could resume Mass during Phase 03 (as this phase allows movie theatres to operate at no more than 50% capacity), but we simply do not know yet. I expect that we will be experimenting with "drive in" options for the next few months.

The archdiocese has been formulating a plan in the days following the announcement and will be instructing parishes about the future during a web conference on Wednesday. At that point, we will have a much better idea about what May, June, and July are going to look like. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

Annual Catholic Appeal

Sometime this week, we expect our parishioners will receive a letter from the Archbishop about this year's Annual Catholic Appeal. To some, this may seem ill-timed, but we need to remember that the ACA is not a *fundraiser* so much as it is a *tax*. The way the Church is structured, and has been for centuries, dioceses fund themselves by taxing their parishes, and the ACA is simply our feel-good way to carry out this tax each year. We cannot delay the ACA because, just as our parish continues to have employees and bills to pay during this shutdown, so does our diocese.

To be honest, this may be the most excited I have ever been for an Annual Catholic Appeal because these last few months have shown me how important and helpful it is for our church to have a central administration. The Coronavirus Crisis has gone *so much smoother* for us than it otherwise could have because the diocese gave us firm and helpful directions every step of the way.

Some Political Topics

Over the last few weeks, various political topics have presented themselves, and it seemed best to present them all at once.

A Pledge of Civility

In late February, the bishops of Washington State published a letter encouraging all Washington Catholics to join the *Civilize It* campaign, which involves a short pledge to recognize the dignity and good will of those with whom we disagree politically. We join with our bishops and strongly encourage Assumption parishioners to read the letter and make the pledge, especially as we ramp up to the general election.

[Letter in English](#) || [Carta en español](#)

Ethical Coronavirus Vaccine

The Coronavirus Crisis will be over once society has achieved “herd immunity” (meaning that enough people are immune that the virus struggles to spread). Without allowing every member of society to become infected, herd immunity will require a vaccine, similar to the annual flu shot, though hopefully more permanent.

Unfortunately, occasionally the creators of vaccines will use cell lines procured from aborted children. The only Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccines available in the United States, for example, all rely on aborted fetal cell lines, and some conscientious Catholics have struggled with these vaccines for this exact reason.

While the Vatican has clarified that the recipients of these types of vaccines are removed enough from the act that they cannot be thought to participate or endorse the act of abortion, that same Vatican instruction also strongly urged Catholics to advocate against the use of aborted fetal cells in vaccine development. Knowing how important the Coronavirus vaccine is, the United States bishops have asked us to advocate *now* for a vaccine free of problematic tissue, so that no Catholic will have any reservations in receiving it once it becomes available.

You can learn more about this issue, and send a letter to the HHS secretary, [at the WSCC website](#).

Referendum 90

Our bishops also published a letter, sent to all the priests, supporting R-90 and permitting the collection of signatures on parish grounds to get R-90 on the ballot in November.

As the bishops explain it:

R-90 is a referendum to reject or approve a new law requiring all state school districts to provide Comprehensive Sexual Health Education (CSHE) for grades kindergarten through 12. Formerly Senate Bill 5395, this law was passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Inslee on March 27, 2020. Signatures are being collected now to put R-90 on the state’s fall ballot.

The Washington State Catholic Conference is the common voice of the Catholic Bishops of the Archdiocese of Seattle, the Diocese of Spokane, and the Diocese of Yakima. We oppose the new CSHE law for the following reasons:

- *CSHE prevents locally elected school boards from fully determining their own policy in this sensitive area. The law does not allow local communities to protect their own values. The Catholic principle of subsidiarity holds that certain issues are best dealt with locally. The sensitive matter of sex education is one such example of the appropriateness of handling some governmental issues at the local level.*
- *The CSHE law does not ensure meaningful curricula review by parents and guardians nor provide for public comment prior to implementation. Additionally, CSHE curriculum fails to adequately address complex moral issues tied to human sexuality. As the bishops of the Second Vatican Council taught, the “family is a kind of school of deeper humanity ... the right of parents to ... educate their children in the bosom of the family must be safeguarded.” Gaudium et Spes, The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, no. 52.*
- *There are over 130,000 public school students in the state who do not speak English at home. There is no plan to communicate the new curricula or opt out information to these families.*

More information about R-90 can be found on the campaign websites (which are *not* supervised by the Church):

<https://www.parentsforsafeschools.com/> | | <https://www.fpiw.org/referendum-90/r-90/>

At the moment, Assumption does not have a plan that allows us to collect signatures safely, but we will work to develop one over the next week.